

## [Mr. John Oliphant]

[??] DUP

### FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER F. W. Kaul, L. A. Rollins ADDRESS Hastings, Nebr.

DATE Dec. 1938. SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant - Mr. John Oliphant, 6th & Briggs, Hastings, Nebr.
2. Date and time of interview - residence Dec. 1938
3. Place of interview-
4. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you - none
5. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant - none
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. - Lives in apartment with wife. Modern, neat. [???

### FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER F. W. Kaul, L. A. Rollins ADDRESS Hastings, Nebr.

DATE Dec. 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mr. John Oliphant, Hastings, Nebr.

1. Ancestry - English

## Library of Congress

2. Place and date of birth - Adams County, Marcy 5, 1883
3. Family - Wife, one daughter
4. Place lived in, with dates - Adams County, traveled Nebr., Kans, for many years [calling?] on grocery trade.
5. Education, with dates - Grade schools in Hastings, Nebr.
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates - Salesman
7. Special skills and interests - none
8. Community and religious activities - Methodist Church
9. Description of informant - 6 foot tall, dark, weight 190. Neat and clean cut in appearance. Alert and well versed in affairs of the day.
10. Other points gained in interview - none.

### FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

I was born March 5, 1883, in Adams County, six miles northwest of Hastings. My parents moved to Hastings when I was a little boy. I had made a few grades in the Schumway School and finished the rest of the grades on the ward school of Hastings. I started to work when I was 14 and have been going ever since. First I worked as a delivery boy in a butcher shop. I held the job six years, perhaps a little longer. My next job was that of grocery salesman, wholesale groceries. I worked for this firm 20 years. Salesmen could sell real orders in those days.

I have many recollections of the time I spent as a boy on the farm. I think mother was the best cook, I have ever known and her best dish was apple dumpling with dip. She would

## Library of Congress

peel a half bushel of apples at a time, core them, place a sugar syrup with vanilla flavor in the space where the core was and put them together / again and place the apple on a piece of rolled out bread dough and wrap the dough around the apple and twist it at the top, then she would place them in an iron kettle which was standing on the fire which kettle contained hot water and lard mixed. She would place three dozen of these apples in the hot kettle and would continue the process until all the apples were prepared. The reason she had to make so many at a time was because there was six brothers and four sisters who all had a hardy appetite for mother's apple dumplings with dip were outstanding.

2

Among other outstanding incidents of my boyhood life on the farm are the parties we used to have. Young people would gather weekly at one of their homes, usually on a Friday evening. After the usual greetings were over the young people would sing a number of old time songs and play games. Among the songs were such as "When You and I were young, Maggie," "Yankee Doodle," "Old Black Joe," "Way down upon the Suwanee River," and "John's Body."

We played such games as "Drop the Handkerchief," "Spring Platter," "Tin, Tin, Come in," "Ring around the Rosy," "Button, Button who's got the Button," "Fruit Basket," and others. Before the party broke up we partook of a lunch which the guests had brought along in baskets. We went home all having had a good time and knowing that we would have an equally good time at the next party.

The folks always had company on Sunday, when the neighbors would call and visit. Butchering day was a great day during the winter. Father butchered several hogs at a time. The neighbors would help him. The reason I remember butchering day so well because from that day on for a long season we would have plenty of good sausages flavored with sage. Mother would served these sausages with hot cakes and syrup for breakfast. Father prepared his own brine and cured the meat for six weeks, when the hams and bacons were smoked and packed in oats for [?] use.

## Library of Congress

I was married in 1904. I have only one daughter. We attend the Methodist Church.

3

While I have no faith in superstitions, my mother did. She used to tell us that if a bird flew into the house and out again someone would presently die in the family or relationship. She often related this an incident of this nature which was suppose to have announced to her the death of my oldest brother. On the morning of his death a robin flew into the house and left again. Mother related this to us many times.

My wife believed if one would kill a cat it meant seven years of bad luck. She connected the same superstition with the breaking of a mirror and even cry over the same. If we would be out driving and a black cat would cross our path, she forced me to go back fearing that some unfortunate thing would happen. My wife's mother believed that a cow could be bewitched when the milk went bad. In that case they would call a neighboring witch doctor to treat the cow. The treatment consisted in splitting the cow's tail open with a curved knife and putting something into this opening and closing the incision. What the witch doctor placed in the opening was never revealed, that was the mystery of the treatment. My mother-in-law claimed that this treatment would invariably restore the production of good milk. My wife's mother was a Russian.

In the 90's the local Catholic convent situated in the northwestern part of Hastings was vacant for some time. The saying arose that the place was haunted. The one-horse carryalls conducted quite a business 4 taking people to and from the convent to examine its weirdness [personally?]. It is said that groaning sounds were heard within the dark walls of the convent but whence they come no one knew. I was 10 or 12 years old at that time [??] well recall this incident.

[????????] was a traveling salesman took place at [??], [?], as follows. A farmer came into the drug store of that [???] a pocket book and had it charged. A similar incident took place in [?] Kansas, a merchant had purchased a [?] check protector. A check [??] in the amount

## Library of Congress

of [?] or 23 was the first check protected by the machine, however protected at [?] check was it [?] back.”